

The 4T9er

LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET!

**The 49 Squadron Association Magazine
April 2008 Issue 10**



Lincolns were in service with 49 Squadron from October 1949 to July 1955.
RF398 (Not one of ours!) is preserved at Cosford.

IN MEMORIAM

J. Smith J.G. Stewart O. Williams

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

WELCOME TO:

NEW MEMBERS

**G. 'Bill' Evans James Arnold
Noel "Taffy" Thomas Harry Wilkinson**

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

**Heather Burton Tony Randall Joy Jordan
Richard Bartlett-May Judy Rudham Josephine Williams**

NEW FRIENDS

Keith Pyrah Richard Evans

GONE AWAY

Mrs D Begg



The beautifully tended graves of the Cole crew in Oosterbeek, Holland.

Photo; Courtesy Truus Oosterhaar

EDITORIAL

Having been given the publication dates in the last issue no doubt you are wondering why The 4T9er has been published in April rather than May. There are two reasons. Firstly, the remains of Hampden P1206 are due to be returned to Scampton in April or May. Secondly, the funerals, with full Military Honours, of the two gunners, Sgts Kehoe and Mullinger, who were recovered in September last year, are to take place on May 7th in Holland. In addition a memorial is to be unveiled and dedicated at the crash site on the afternoon of the 7th. Representatives of 49 Squadron Association are to be present on each of these occasions. I felt that there is too little time to do these important events justice to meet the normal May publication date and it would be too late to report in August. Therefore a full report will be published in a June issue. It remains to be seen what the publication dates will be thereafter.

As always thank you all for your letters, e-mails, phone calls and donations. I am also grateful that so many returned the census/continuation forms to me. These will be of tremendous help to us when we receive enquiries, presently running at two a week, from veterans and relatives seeking to learn more of their friends and relations who served with the squadron. I have not had time to chase up those who have not replied yet but there is no point in wasting your money in sending magazines etc. to 'phantoms'. I do not use that word disrespectfully. **If Members or Associates have not returned your slips then please do so immediately if you wish to continue your membership.**

With regret I have to report three 'Postings Out on the facing page.

Despite that our numbers still increase as we welcome four new Members. 'Bill' Evans was an Airframe Fitter on Valiants at Wittering. We welcomed Jim Lowry in the last issue and referred to his involvement in entertainment, well, we now have another member of the troupe. Noel "Taffy" Thomas, The Welsh Tenor, has joined us. Only nine more to find and we will get them to put on a show in the NAAFI. James Arnold told me that he had previously been a member of the Association but had lost touch through a series of house moves. Thanks to Eric Jones we are pleased to welcome James back into the family. He, along with late member John Bryan, were the sole survivors when their Lancaster crashed near Arnhem. On June 15th 1943 Sgt. G.S.Cole and his crew were returning from a raid on Oberhausen when they were shot down by a Ju88. The graves of the six who died have been carefully tended by firstly, Truus Oosterhaar MBE and now by Erik and Alle-Oke van der Meiden. The photograph on the facing page shows the beautiful condition in which the graves are kept. Colin Cripps, our Researcher, has helped many people to find information on their relatives and following James' rejoining he received his just reward. I told Colin that James was a Wop and on the squadron at the same

time as his Uncle Bob. Colin wrote to James and received the reply that he was at gunnery school with Bob and remembered him on the squadron also. Colin is thrilled to bits that at last he has found someone who knew his uncle personally. B/a Harry Wilkinson commenced his tour with S/L Gilpin in 61 Squadron before joining 49'. After the pilot completed his tour Harry finished his with New Zealander F/L Munroe, together with Member, Des Harris (Nav).

We also welcome six new Associates. Heather Burton is the daughter of Sgt Ernest Roden, Flight Engineer in P/O Johnny Moss's crew. Whilst Johnny and Len Bradfield survived, sadly the remaining crew members perished during a raid on Nuremburg, August 10/11th 1943. Tony Randall is the son of my uncle's pilot, F/O Harry Randall, who died with the rest of the crew when they were shot down whilst on the way home from Peenemunde on August 18th 1943. Joy Jordan is the little sister of F/O Gordon Jeffreys DFC, a 21 year old pilot who was lost 17th January 1943 during a raid on Berlin. As he had been forced to abort on the previous night's raid he took off for the thirtieth op of his tour but tragically became the first to die on ops from Fiskerton. Richard Bartlett-May, who now lives in San Diego, was only 18 months old when his father, Sgt Stan Bartlett, was killed in the Lincoln crash in Kenya. Judy Rudham was seven years old when her father was killed with all the crew on June 6th 1942 whilst flying as Wop to Manchester pilot S/L P M De Mestre DSO, DFC. Jo Williams is the daughter of Owen Williams whose name appears in 'IN MEMORIAM'. Owen's photo appeared in the February 2007 issue. He flew his first tour, with 49', between June '44 and January '45. Jo told me that her father was laid to rest wearing his blazer and Pathfinder tie.

New 'Friend', Keith Pyrah is the 'little brother' of member Bill Pyrah who wrote of his Scampton experiences in the previous issue of The 4T9er. Richard Evans' father served with 83 Squadron alongside 49' at Scampton.

Like it or not, the association is about to enter a period of transition. Unless the squadron 'number plate' is reallocated, soon the number of members who served with 49' will fall. The long term future lies very much with the Associate Members and 'Friends'. In the early days of associate membership it was expedient to limit the numbers by allowing only one associate per deceased 49er. However, I have found in the last few years that telling a prospective Associate that their siblings can only join as 'Friends' has cooled their interest. We have decided to discontinue the rule so that any number of associate members related to a deceased 49er can join. We already allow unlimited 'Friends' related to living full members - on the demise of that member all the 'Friends' can now become associates. The ruling that the relatives of a **living** full member can only join as a 'Friend' remains for now.

In this issue you will read a piece by our Archivist, Ed Norman, describing the amazing circumstances that enabled him to introduce a half sister and brother

to each other, neither of whom having been aware of the other's existence.

Reg Woolgar spotted Eric Clarke's photo in the February issue of The 4T9er and realised that he and Eric were Wops together on Hampdens at Scampton in late '41/January 42. They are now exchanging e-mails - sixty-six years later.

My father died in January and I have been form filling for Inheritance Tax and Probate. A point of interest, under English and Welsh law, it is a fallacy that simply signing over your house to your children more than seven years before you die, even though you continue to live in it, exempts it from consideration for Inheritance Tax. The seven year period commences from when you move out and the value applied is that at the time that you vacate, not when you signed it over. That makes a considerable difference in these days of rising property prices. In short, from a tax point of view it's a waste of time signing over your property if you continue to live there.

On February 9th the Daily Express included a two page feature entitled, "**V2, Hitler's hated wonder weapon.**" It started; *"The news that a town in Germany has named its school after Klaus Reidel, the scientist who helped to invent and develop the V2 rocket, should surprise and shock us. It tells us one of two things, each of which is profoundly worrying.*

"Either, the citizens of Bernstadt auf dem Eigen, on Germany's border with Poland, do not know about the tens of thousands of innocent people who were killed and wounded by Reidel's foul invention, or alternatively they know but just don't care."

It goes on to give details of the V2 and a brief history of its use followed by; *"For five long months the people of Southern England lived in nightly terror of the V2. Unlike us, they could not know when the war would end, or even whether it would end in victory.*

"They did not know that Hitler could only produce 5,000 rockets, less than one third of which would be targeted against them.

"Who was to say that the Fuhrer's boasts about bringing Britain to her knees through the use of his 'wonder weapon' might not come to pass?

"For if D-Day had not taken place when it did, or if Hitler had directed resources in such a way to create 10 times the number of V2s than he did, our country might well have been pulverised and our capital – which absorbed so much punishment during the Second World War - reduced to dust and rubble."

I was extremely annoyed that Bomber Command's part in delaying the introduction of the V2 didn't get a mention and was moved to write the following letter;

"On reading the article on the V2 I was amazed to find that there was no mention of the raid on Peenemunde by Bomber Command in August 1943. Andrew Roberts comments, "For if D-Day had not taken place when it did,our country might well have been pulverised..." Well, had Bomber

Command not pulverised Peenemunde, losing 42 aircraft in the process, thus delaying the launch of the first V2 by four to six months, the D-Day force would have been smashed before it left port and the horror for the citizens of London would have started much earlier.

“Forgetting the 290 young men who died on the Peenemunde raid is every bit as reprehensible as commemorating a Nazi.”

Whilst the letter was slightly edited, for space reasons, the content was fairly accurately published. They did however, once again, call the V2 a flying bomb. Well I suppose it did fly and it certainly was a bomb.

I can't help feeling a little uneasy however about the vehement way in which the author of the article condemned Klaus Reidel, an old boy of the school, and a lifetime enthusiast and experimenter in rocket technology. Was he not serving his country in the best way he could? Is this a case of the winners being the judges? He developed a weapon, he was not responsible for the many lives lost in producing it, didn't the allies invent nuclear weapons? The fact that it was a wicked regime may come into the argument but his boss Werner Von Braun was not pilloried, in fact the team were welcomed into, and pivotal to, the U.S. space projects. A classic example of expediency justifying hypocrisy!

Forgive me for lowering the tone to subjects lavatorial but something has puzzled me for years. Why was the Elsan placed in the coldest place, at the rear of the Lancaster? If 49's Sgt. Alan Morgan lost his fingers to frostbite when he removed his gloves in a vain attempt to secure the rear door then what happened when one pointed 'Percy' at the Elsan at 20,000ft. Serious harm could come to a young lad at -30C! Maybe the skipper said, "Hold on lads, I'm going down to 6,000ft, the nav wants a pee." Surely it would have been better to place the toilet next to the wireless operator where it was nice and warm?

It is Friday March 8th and I have just read in the paper that the Station Commander of RAF Wittering has found it necessary to instruct RAF personnel to refrain from visiting Peterborough in uniform. The reason given is that there have been cases of verbal abuse by the public, thought to be based on the RAF involvement in Afganistan. As this publication is read by families and possibly those of a gentle disposition I am struggling to refrain from letting my anger be transferred into written words. On reflection, I cannot find the words!

The April issue of FlyPast reports that Leicester Aerodrome faces a serious threat of closure if a new development plan is approved. Various other airfields are also at risk as plans are reviewed for around fifty so called 'Eco-Towns' from 'brown field' sites around the UK. Leicester Aerodrome has an active all grass runway. How is that a 'brown field' site? Forgive me if you disagree but I have a sentimental spot for Leicester as I took my first Tiger Moth flight from there. I particularly feel for Leicester Aero Club as they have run the airfield since 1949 and celebrate their 80th birthday next year.

Congratulations to our Chairman on reaching 700 sales of his autobiography, 'Ted the Lad'.

Bookings for this year's Reunion Banquet have reached 97 which has caused the Petwood Hotel to allocate us a bigger room. Although accommodation at Petwood is fully booked we can still accept bookings for the banquet only.

F/L Gary Mennell has received his posting to High Wycombe. Whilst at RAF Scampton Gary has been a great friend of the Association and I am sure that you all join me in wishing him and Nicky a happy life further south. We sincerely hope that they will be able to continue their contact with us.

My thanks to Barbara and the 'Crew' for their continued support without which this job would be impossible to sustain.

'Till the next time.

SISTER AND BROTHER UNITED

By Ed Norman

When I researched my father's contribution to Hitler's downfall, some ten years ago now; I came into contact with Vivienne Mengham, the only child of Phillip Ackroyd Taverner who was dad's pilot. Vivienne was born some six months after the crew were shot down on the 'big effort' to Kassel in October 1943, a raid that resulted in one of the firestorms. Phil held the stricken Lancaster steady while the crew bailed out, but JB 413 blew apart before he could follow them. Five men survived because of his actions and I will always be grateful to him. Because of Phil, I am here today. As a consequence, Vivienne never knew her father and sadly, her mother also died when she was very young. And life went on.

Last month, John Ward received an enquiry from America – such is the power of the internet. John knew of my connection to Phil and passed the enquiry onto me. The young man was asking for information about his grandfather, Phillip Ackroyd Taverner. I replied with a few photos and discretely enquired if he was indeed Phillip's grandson. His father Michael, must have 'read' the hesitancy in my letter and generously replied with some details. With further exchanges by email, I became confident of the connection.

With some tact and diplomacy, the approach to Vivienne was made through the auspices of her cousin, John Scott, and she was delighted to find she now had a half-brother. So, back to America; Michael was also delighted to find he was not an only child. Like Vivienne, he had grown up (on the other side of the Atlantic) without knowing anything of his father. Phillip and Michael's mother had parted some time before Phil met Vivienne's mother.

Contact between them has been made and life begins again. I believe Michael and his family may be with us for the reunion in June.

MY RAF SERVICE; June 53 - June 56

By Denis Colquitt, formerly 3516358 SAC Colquitt D.A.

My enlistment was delayed because of the Queen's Coronation. I eventually joined up on June 12th 1953 and after kitting out at RAF Cardington I was posted to RAF Bridgnorth for square bashing which lasted eight weeks. It was then off to RAF St. Athan for thirteen weeks trade training as an engine mechanic mainly on Bristol Hercules engines. The highlight of this was running up a Vickers Wellington bomber, which I believe was the last flying example, in the last week of training. I saw it flying at St. Athan during the Battle of Britain air display in September 1953.

I was next posted to RAF Wittering, in November 1953, where I was co-opted onto 76 Squadron which was just forming with Canberras (jet engines). There were no aircraft to start with, we just unpacked ground equipment and were kitted out with special protective clothing - rubberised overalls and boots to safeguard against the kerosene fuel. Eventually we got a couple of aircraft and it was quite a sight to see an engine start with cartridges, black smoke pouring out of the exhaust vents.

In December I was transferred to Technical Wing where minor and major services were carried out on Avro Lincolns. I had eventually found my true vocation, albeit on Merlin engines not Hercules. I committed a faux pas one day when one of the barrels that I was using to drain oil out of an engine rolled over and spilt about twenty gallons of dirty engine oil over the hangar floor. It is amazing how far a few gallons of oil spreads on a flat surface. Incidentally, we used to dump all the used oil in a ditch at the bottom of the airfield!

Perhaps as a result of this incident I was transferred to 49 Squadron in January 1954 where I had a very enjoyable time. Shortly after I was transferred the whole squadron was moved a few miles to RAF Upwood from where I have many happy memories.

One winter's day after a fall of snow followed by a partial thaw it then froze overnight. The next day the runway was a sheet of ice / frozen snow which the snow ploughs couldn't shift. Therefore the whole camp, officers included, were pressed into service clearing the runway with shovels and brushes. I have never seen so many shovels and brushes in one place!

During the summer months the ATC spent a couple of weeks in tents which were placed between the arms of our H blocks so that they could use the ablutions. A tent caught fire one night but there were no casualties. They were allowed to go on short hops in one of the Lincolns, about eight at a time. One such trip nearly ended in disaster when on take off the aircraft clipped a civilian contractor's lorry, which was crossing the end of the runway, resulting

in damage to the starboard main undercarriage. It was decided to circle around using up fuel before attempting a landing, which took a couple of hours. Word spread around the camp and everyone seemed to turn out to watch. I had a grandstand view on one of our parked aircraft. Eventually the crippled Lincoln came into land. It appeared to be making a normal landing until the airspeed dropped off and the damaged undercarriage collapsed causing the wing tip to drag along the runway. This resulted in the aircraft veering onto the grass where the good wheel promptly collapsed causing it to slide along on its belly in a cloud of dust. All this time fire engines and other rescue vehicles were racing along the runway chasing the crashing aircraft. As soon as the Lincoln came to rest the rear door swung open and everyone tumbled out, luckily there was no fire or injuries but the ATC lads must have been shaken up. Another time one of our aircraft had an engine failure at the point of take off which was aborted and the it went through the perimeter fence and ended up in a ploughed field with a collapsed undercarriage and bent propellers. Again there was no fire or injuries.

During October 54? the squadron was engaged in Exercise Morning Mist which was a raid on Norway. As we were landing in Norway, we ground crew travelled with the aircraft, we had to wear full flying gear, mae west, parachute, dinghy and helmet incorporating intercom and oxygen mask. I was fortunate to get seated next to the wireless operator on the battery casing in front of the main spar. However, over the North Sea we were 'shot down' having been



intercepted by two Lockheed Shooting Stars of the USAF, I believe, which took up position on our wingtip for a short time. We waved to each other, I was able to look through the astro-dome

which was just above my position. As we were no longer in the 'battle' we flew up the Norwegian coast for a couple of hours before turning and landing at Trondheim on an airfield that was used by the Germans during the war. The runway consisted of slats of wood joined in a criss-cross pattern through which the grass was able to grow, for camouflage possibly. We had a few nights in Trondheim sampling the nightlife then flew back to the UK.

Another time, during the Battle of Britain air show a Lincoln 'bombed' a few grass huts erected on the airfield which was controlled by a few armourers on the ground setting off charges as the aircraft passed over – it looked quite effective accurate bombing. Another Lincoln did a low level pass across the airfield first on four engines, then three, then two and finally one. There were

frantic efforts to restart the engines once it had cleared the airfield boundary – all this at about five hundred feet.

During November 1954 we were sent to Kenya during the Mau Mau emergency. This was the highlight of my service spending six months in the sun. The journey out in two Vickers Valettas took five days over-nighting in Malta, Egypt, Khartoum and an unscheduled stop in Juba, Southern Sudan because of a violent storm. We also stopped for refuelling and lunch at various airfields along the route. As I had never been abroad, apart from my trip to Norway, all this was very exciting.

On arrival at RAF Eastleigh we were divided into three shifts, each shift working two days with one day off. We quickly got acclimatised and into the daily routine which turned out quite cushy for us engine lads, because in the dry conditions the engines ran with hardly any trouble. The aircraft also carried a light fuel load, 800 gallons instead of the usual 2,800 gallons. We also had help with the fuel hoses from the civilian staff who manned the tankers. Apart from checking oil and coolant levels we had very little to do. Our days off were spent at the camp swimming pool or occasionally we would go into Nairobi but as most of the town and country were out of bounds there were only cinemas, bars and restaurants to visit. Most of the white settlers carried side arms quite openly just like the western movies. There was even one bar, with bat-wing doors, called San Chique run by a Frenchman.

Christmas time was great as we had a bar in the billet – well stocked – and on Christmas Day we had turkey and all the trimmings served by the officers and nco's with free beer on the tables. There was such a noise from the diners that the Orderly Officer could not get our attention so he fired two shots into the ceiling so that he could introduce the Station Commander who made a short speech. During the afternoon we went down to the pool where somebody rode a bicycle off the top diving board.

The daily routine of the squadron was that all six aircraft would take off at dawn and drop their bombs, returning at about 0900hrs. They would be refuelled and rearmed with 14 x 250lb bombs. Then one would take off every hour on the hour until dusk, usually about 1900hrs.

We shared the only runway with civilian aircraft so Lincolns would take off and land between aircraft from BOAC, Pan Am, El Al, Air France etc. The Health and Safety boys would have a fit if that happened nowadays. The runway appeared to be made of packed earth so it was quite a sight when a Lockheed Constellation landed and applied reverse thrust – it just disappeared in a cloud of dust. By the way, the armourers had a very busy time loading fourteen bombs at a time on each aircraft. Although they had electric winches they often broke down and it was a case of winching up by hand. In the heat



Mount Kenya photographed from an RAF
Canberra flying at 17,500 ft.

Photo; Don Coomber

inside the fuselage this was not an easy job.

Around February the squadron started trips to neighbouring countries such as Tanganyika and Uganda but the most popular was to Aden – a duty free port where watches, cameras etc. could be bought at rock bottom prices. Being an Arab country bartering was the method of buying so depending on how good you were you could get some bargains. It was

said that the prices went up if there was a ship in port. I spent a couple of days there at RAF Khomaksar. It had a cinema with no roof as it hardly ever rained, It was strange watching a movie and then looking up and seeing stars. The swimming pool which was on the sea front had a huge shark net around it. We did a bit of shopping at Steamer Point and even went into the crater which was really out of bounds.

I also got a trip to the coast – Nyali Beach near Mombasa which is now a tourist resort. Then it was only a few huts by the beach. It was much hotter on the coast than Nairobi which is 6000ft above sea level. Mombasa was a port full of bars frequented by seamen. We got talking to some US Navy sailors who were bragging about travelling at 30 knots, destroyers I think. I didn't like to tell them that we travelled at 200 knots. However, we all got drunk and had a good time...I think. On the way back to camp the roadside was lit up by tiny lights - fireflies I believe. Returning to Eastleigh I got a turn in the rear turret where you could have a crafty smoke, flicking the dog ends out of a window.

During February we lost one of our aircraft. It had crashed whilst beating up a police post. These were small isolated watch towers out in the country. The pilot must have misjudged it and hit the ground as all six crew were killed. The funerals were held soon after and full military honours were observed. [*See Armed Forces Memorial, The 4T9er, February 2008, Issue 9. Ed.*]

There was also a squadron of about twelve Harvards at Eastleigh. They would



A Canberra taxis past 49 Squadron's Lincolns.

Photo; Don Coomber

go everywhere in threes, taking off together and landing together in a staggered three. We could have gone up for a flight for the payment of one shilling. We also shared the camp with some army personnel, signallers I think. There were lots of army out in the field that we sometimes ran into on our visits to Nairobi.



A flight of Harvards over The Aberdares

Ungikoruo wonia mundu o wothe wa Mbutu cia Ugitiri Bathi Ino, niekumenya urenda kwineana na niegugutuga kuringana na kiiraniro giki kieru.

MWIGITO WA KWIHONOKIA UKINEANA

THE BEARER OF THIS PASS WISHES TO SURRENDER. He is to be given fair treatment, food, and medical attention if required. He will be detained but he is **NOT** to be prosecuted for any offence connected with the Emergency which he may have committed prior to 18th January, 1955.

UYU UKUUITE "BATHI" ino arenda kwineana. Niatugwo wega, aheo irio na arigitwo angikoruo ni abatairio niguo. Ahingiruo na ndagacirithio ni undu wa uuru o wothe wa Mau Mau uria ekire mbere ya January 18, mwaka wa 1955.

ANAYEBEBA BARUA HII ANATAKA KUJITOLEA. Mpe msaada mwema, chakula, na atibiwe ikiwa anahitaji. Atafungiwa lakini hatashtakiwa kwa ajili ya uovu wo wote wa Mau Mau aliofanya mbele ya January 18, mwaka huu wa 1955.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE ERSKINE,
Commander-in-Chief.

SIR EVELYN BARING,
Governor.

PRINTED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION, KENYA, BY THE GOVERNMENT PRINTER, NAIROBI

Surrender leaflet of the type dropped to the Mau Mau.



RAF Eastleigh, Kenya. Base football team 1956.

Photo courtesy; Don Coomber

One night some civilians invited us to some bar in the country. We were having drinks at the bar when a shot rang out. The barman immediately switched off the lights and some of the civvies ran outside. I'm not clear as to what happened but it appeared that somebody had fired through a window and hit the guy standing next to me. He wasn't too badly hurt and the drink would have acted as an anaesthetic.

One evening whilst in the camp the lights suddenly went out and the Orderly Officer announced that intruders had been spotted and we were to go to action stations. Everyone rushed to the armoury and grabbed what they could. The duty armourer was shouting for all weapons to be signed for but no one did. We took up positions by the parked aircraft and trained our weapons across the airfield but nothing happened and we eventually stood down.

Guard Duty at night was a scary experience. I was on my own for two hours with a Lea Enfield and a bandolier of thirty rounds, ten in the mag. and one up the spout. I had to patrol around the parked aircraft. There was a searchlight of sorts. You had to wind two elements together to form an arc which would produce a brilliant light which you scanned the airfield with. It was very spooky patrolling up and down particularly on a moonless night when you would hear all sorts of unusual noises.

One day a swarm of locusts passed over – it took about an hour to pass – all the time flocks of birds would pick off stragglers. An odd one would fall to the ground and you could see that they were a sort of large grasshopper.

As the food at the mess was pretty awful a strike was organised. It was arranged to have breakfast as usual because of Queen's Regulations but to boycott lunch and dinner. The NAAFI did well that day and there was some improvement to the food but we still got pineapple at every meal as a sweet.

By April the ops were scaled down and we only had to work one day in three. We dropped thousands of surrender leaflets and more jollies were organised to Entebbe, Zanzibar and even The Seychelles.

One day two Junkers 52's landed and parked up by our hangar. They were operated by the French Air Force which must have commandeered them from the Luftwaffe. They were strange looking aircraft with three engines and made of corrugated metal. They had a take off speed of what seemed like 60 mph. Another day two Dakotas appeared, gleaming silver as if they had been polished. Apparently they belonged to the Sultan of Zanzibar who was visiting the country with his harem.

During my time in Kenya I took my SAC test and with a little help from an Indian civilian in the workshop passed my practical test making a test piece.

However, it was nearly time to go home and a Hastings aircraft was sent for us. We had a celebration that night when lots of booze was consumed and a good time was had by all. Fortunately we didn't leave the next day because the aircraft had developed a fault and we had to await a spare to be flown out. Eventually we left early June 1955 and flew back via Khartoum and Tripoli where we stayed overnight in an old hangar peppered with bullet holes.

After two weeks disembarkation leave I returned to the squadron which eventually disbanded around September. I was then posted to RAF Gaydon where I worked on Valiants. I seemed to have come full circle having started on Canberras.

Gaydon was a sort of staging post for Valiants. New planes would arrive from the factory and then be checked over before going to the operational units. They made quite a noise taking off and landing and as the camp cinema was located near the end of the runway the soundtrack would be drowned out whenever one passed. We did not have much to do as these aircraft were brand new. They did however have thirsty engines and took an enormous fuel load, almost 10,000 gallons although fuel was now measured by weight, so many pounds. We didn't have to scramble about on the wings like the Lincolns as they used a bayonet fitting and refuelling could be handled at ground level.

I was demobbed in May 1956 and started four weeks demob leave. I had to go down to Aldershot to get my civilian clothes – suit, shirt, tie etc.

All in all I enjoyed my service and looking back I am glad that I experienced it. It would be about ten years before I went abroad again!

READER'S LETTERS

New Member, Noel "Taff" Thomas wrote:

"I was given your magazine, February 2008 issue 9, and would very much like to join. I was posted to Scampton, 6th September 1940, then Fiskerton, Fulbeck, and Syerston.

"In the mag it mentioned 'Jim Lowry, Aircraft Electrician' who was involved in camp entertainment. I too was involved in that show, 'Taffy Thomas, Our Welsh Tenor'. I enclose a copy of the cast photograph, also the programme. [See pages 16 & 17. Ed.] I was involved on Hampdens, Lancasters I & III i/c modifications. I am now 90 years of age."

Taff visited the museum at RAF Scampton and was given the copy of The 4T9er by Gary Mennell. Little did Gary realise what that would lead to. I have put Taff and Jimmy back in touch with each other again after sixty – odd years. Ed.



Tom Jimmy Harry Gene Taffy Dorothy Don Wally Terry
McAdams Lowry Wilde Tennell Thomas Brown. Bellamy Wright King
Sgt. CPL CPL Sgt.



Jim Lowry e-mailed, via Dee Black, this charming photo of him and his dad taken in 1943. In case you're wondering, Dad is the Flight Sergeant! Ed.

100/4061

THE CAST

Irene Turnell, Dorothy Brown, Phyl Shepherd, Lou Ravitz, Jimmy Lowry, Norman Newsham, Taffy Thomas, Harry Wilde, Don Bottomley, Tom McAdams, Terry King.

"LET THE EVENING'S ENJOYMENT BEAR THE MORNING'S REFLECTION—"

Ballet Scenes	Irene Turnell
Musical Arrangements	Tom McAdams
Lighting	Pete Warrior
Stage Manager	Harry Tyrer
Business Manager	Tony Salter

Lou Ravitz Special Suiting—

By very kind permission of the entire cast

Special Costumes	The Girls and Section 22L
Production	Terry King

E. 757

Presenting

"The Joes' Show"

(A SHOW BY SOME OF THE JOES —
FOR THE REST OF THE JOES.)

A NON-STOP REVUE
IN LAUGHTER TIME



By kind permission of
G/Capt. L. V. SPENCER, O.B.E.
Officer Commanding R.A.F. Station,
FULBECK

PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME

*All the Very Best
Taffy and I spend for
many happy Jimmy Lowry*

1.—"TO START YOU SMILING"

2.—TAFFY THOMAS - Our Welsh Tenor

3.—"AT THE VICARAGE"

Harry Wilde, Terry King, Norman Newsham,
Jimmy Lowry. TAFFY THOMAS.

4.—IRENE TURNELL - "Twinkling"

5.—TERRY KING - Something New

6.—JIMMY LOWRY

Once a Not
HARRY WILDE *voice*
about of Luck, Harry
"Drunk Again"

8.—DOROTHY BROWN - "Charm"

9.—"ORDERLY OFFICER" (or "Any Complaints?")

Terry King, Jimmy Lowry, Don Bottomley,
Taffy Thomas.

10.—TOM MCADAMS - Contrast in Black and White

11.—HARRY AND IRENE

How Many Hearts Have YOU Broken?

12.—"HUSBAND'S DILEMMA"

Terry King, ~~Lowry~~ Taffy Thomas.

All the Best you old musical.
13.—NORMAN NEWSHAM—ACCORDIONMANIA.

14.—LOU RAVITZ—"The Erk with a Thousand Cags"
(Customers are warned anti-dazzle glasses may
be necessary).

15.—DON BOTTOMLEY - A Voice You'll Like

16.—IRENE - "At the Ballet"

17.—WALLY WRIGHT - "Mystery Inc."

18.—DOT AND TAFF. - Two in Harmony

19.—"TO KEEP YOU SMILING"

THE KING

P.S.—. . . . Incidentally, don't blame us if things don't
happen in this order. We just thought you would
like to know what possibly may happen.

From John Barraclough I received the following:

“Jimmy Lowry, I remember him joining us. Always a happy and cheerful soul. Always able to give advice on what shows to visit when on leave if you went up to London.”

I have spoken to Jim who confirmed that he had an interest in the theatre and as he lived in London was usually well informed on what was going on. John and Jim were both ‘B’ Flight Aircraft Electricians at Fiskerton. Ed.

‘Jim’ Bridger wrote responding to two points in the November issue of The 4T9er, unfortunately the February issue was already being printed when the letter was received:

“1. BRIDGNORTH. On page 6 you ask if anyone else struggled from the railway station to the RAF station with full kit on that blazing summer. Well yes, I am another! I arrived at the Aircrew Recruiting Centre on 24th May 1943 and was in a group marched off to a requisitioned block of flats in St. John’s Wood. Drill, marching, inoculations, early calls, being yelled at, kitting out - Oh the misery! If my memory serves me right, we were there three weeks, so would have got to Bridgnorth in mid June - just before your father, but we would certainly have been there at the same time! The Sergeant who took us on that march was a considerate chap and about three times he called a halt and told us to sit on the grassy roadside banks and get our breath back. From then on it was all drill, learning and practising Morse Code and the basics of the .303 Browning m/c gun. In October 78 when all the huts were no more, I drove across the parade square and took a photo of Connie sitting on the bonnet of my (company) car. If in 1943 I had known that 35 years later it would be like that, it may have helped it to be bearable!

“2. On page 25, I was astonished to read about politicians deciding whether to have Spitfires or Defiants! Y’see there was/is this Air Ministry outfit, full of RAF types, and I reckon one or two of them should know about aeroplanes and they would decide - anyway it wasn’t even comparing like for like!

When R.J.Mitchell’s brilliant Supermarine seaplanes won the Schneider Trophy races three years running and thus it was Britain’s for keeps, Mitchell set about designing a monoplane fighter – as small as possible subject to having the new Rolls Royce ‘Merlin’ engine. So the A.M. chaps put out a Specification F5/1934 to cover the prototype, then F37/1934 for production. The first of these went to 19 Squadron in May 1938.

“In 1934 some Hawker Demons (biplanes) were produced with an early rotating turret, and the A.M. chaps thought this idea was worth developing - so issued Specification F9/1935. The Defiant was built to meet it. I shouldn’t think it was ever envisaged that it could mix it in a ‘dogfight’ with enemy single seat fighters, but the range of fire could be useful in attacking bomber formations. However the extra man and the heavy turret considerably cut down on speed and ability to turn, and in an emergency there was virtually no chance for the

gunner to get out. Still the first squadron got them in December 1939. They went into action over Dunkirk and, catching the enemy by surprise, downed 38 in one day! But when the Messerschmitts realised it was safe to attack them from below their losses mounted. Then when the Luftwaffe switched to night bombing, the Defiant, fitted with the first air to air radar, became our first night fighter and had a fair success rate. One night, winter 1940 / 41 I was standing outside my home just south of Gravesend, watching a long line of enemy flares floating down over Tilbury Docks - a long, long burst of machine gun fire and the flares were put out west to east. It could only have been a Defiant! Next they did great work with air-sea rescue.”

Jim goes on to give details of the history of this aircraft. As for the Air Ministry being independent of politicians, well there was The Secretary of State for Air who was a member of the Cabinet. This position was created on January 10th 1919 to, “Manage the Royal Air Force”. The first incumbent was, coincidentally, Winston Churchill who was also Secretary of State for War at that time. The Secretary of State for Air, when the Specifications resulting in the Spitfire and Defiant were issued, was Charles Vane-Tempest-Stewart followed by Philip Cunliffe Lister. Regarding Jim’s speculation that the comparison of the Defiant with the Spitfire was not comparing like for like, I agree that with the precious gift of hindsight this is now obvious. However, with the advent of the monoplane fighters in the thirties there was a sudden change in the concept of air fighting and there was the thought that the Defiant’s circle of fire would be of great advantage in a ‘dog fight’. Without the turret the prototype had a fair maximum speed of 302 mph. If one optimistically ignores, or doesn’t foresee, the drop in speed and manoeuvrability that a turret imposes, then the ability to fire at an enemy on one’s tail must have seemed very attractive. Ed.

Archie Ross sent the following e-mail:

“I usually scan the membership list with interest to see if any of my former squadron colleagues’ names and addresses appear but so far I have been unlucky. I served on Christmas Island whilst 49 Squadron were out for the ‘short break’ holidays, but at that time I was with Transport Command Hastings and Dakota Flight. Most of the flights were on attachment and I spent the full twelve months as permanent staff on the island. On my return to the U.K. I spent two years in Flying Training Command, and was posted to Marham and completed my service on 49 Squadron from 1962 to 1964 as an instrument fitter. I am quite surprised that there doesn’t seem to be many of the Valiant members names I recognize, and would be grateful either to hear of them or from them. I appreciate and respect that many present membership are slightly older than myself as I am a sprightly 74 (I don’t think SPRIGHTLY is the word) years of age, but it would be nice to hear from Alf Shuker, ‘Trader’ Horn, Dave Grey, Dave Footit, Chris Barber and perhaps we could enlist a few

names to keep the Association going. Many of the Crew Chiefs I knew also, but alas the Grim Reaper has taken his toll and my recall like many others, is not what it used to be.

“For my sins, today I work voluntarily at the National Memorial Arboretum with many ex-servicemen, two mornings a week, and find the experience extremely interesting. One of my colleagues was a Vulcan pilot who was about to be posted to 49 Squadron when the Valiants were taken out of service, which I hasten to add was nothing do with me.

“The pictures of the Memorial at Alrewas in the magazine [*Feb issue 9. Ed.*] were wonderful, but the whole story is not portrayed in the pictures. It is probably the most singularly emotional experience from any memorial in my life. One cannot see the young widows, and mother’s faces as they ask for the location of their loved one’s names, or see the sometimes very sad expressions on the faces of the older veterans when they come in. The pride on the faces of many ex-servicemen beams out as they receive their badges, and one very simply sobbed his eyes out with pride as he accepted his badge in front of his son and grandchildren. I felt so sad for him, I had to give him a hug! One surveys the 16,000 names of those who have died since 1946 and everyone asks the same question. “FOR WHAT?” As always the burning question brings a large lump to the throat and a genuine tear to the eyes. The most hardened Marine +Commandos cannot help but be moved.

If you have never been to this long overdue tribute to men and women who gave their all, come and see for yourself.”

I believe that the badges to which Archie refers are the Veterans Badges which are available from the Arboretum. Ed.

On receiving an enquiry from non Members Ben Jordan and his brother Nick on behalf of their mother, new Associate Member Joy Jordan, regarding their uncle F/O Gordon Jefferys DFC, I checked our database and found that Eric Clarke flew his Manchester ops with this pilot. I therefore sought Eric’s permission for Ben to contact him. This lead to Eric consulting his logbook resulting in him finding that he flew 47 times with Jefferys. Five of these were ops. Eric then told me that he had once ‘thumbed a lift’ in a Whitley flown by him.

“Adverting to our telephone conversation re F/O Gordon Jefferies – please forgive the ageing processes and shortcomings. The occasion was correct but the detail was wrong. My 95 year old brainbox was telling me it was Gordon who landed me at Doncaster airfield – No!

“My Log book records :-

‘Hampden AT 127 April 13th 1942 F/Lt L P Massey DFC (he signed my March 1942 flying hours as for OC B Flt.)’ We came in low over the famous Doncaster St. Leger Race Course and crossed the old Great North Road, A1, landing on the grass runway. F/L Massey told me to report in to the Watch

Tower. I did so, and what a reception I got from the civilian Control Officer - he was livid. I gave him the Hampden's number, the pilot's name and the reason for landing, my name, rank, number etc., but he said we had no authority to land and he would lodge a complaint to the relevant authority, his rejoinder was, 'Who the hell do you bomber boys think you are?' (In the 1930's KLM Airlines used the Doncaster Airfield for its Dutch service.) However, within half an hour I was home !

"Regarding the Whitley, I was not aware that we had a Whitley on the Station but when I enquired if there was any local flying that could give me a lift on leave I found I was a passenger in a Whitley piloted by my former pilot, P/O Jefferies, who landed me at RAF Finningley. This was 4th July 1942 and all I had to do was sign out at the guard room. In one hour I was home.

"Another instance of 'hitching by air' was when I was Chief Signals F/L at RAF Long Marston (satellite of 24 OTU Honeybourne). This was on 12th July 1944 and my wife had given birth to our second son the day before. I joined a cross country exercise, instructed the pupil W/op on the way and was landed at RAF Lindholme. The aircraft was a Wellington flown by F/O Parnell, a Canadian instructor. No problem there, I signed out at the Guard Room and was home in about an hour and a half."

Trevor Jennings wrote:

"Thank you for Issue 9 of The 4T9er. The articles therein were most interesting - I think my skipper, Tudor Jones, did his 'Dicky Trip' with Eric [*Jones. Ed.*] on one of his dozen trips to Berlin.

"I now feel I must refer to the 'poignant' letter left by Sgt. John Ellenor to his daughter Barbara. Privileged to read it. I felt many emotions over its impact on me personally, evoking many distant memories.

"The 'Dickinson' and 'Tudor Jones' crews arrived at Fiskerton in December 1943 to commence their operational tours, and thereafter did many operations together. John Ellenor actually flew as our 'Mid-Upper' on the Berlin raids 29/12/43 and 1/1/44 respectively. As Tudor's rear gunner, I know I valued his calm, quiet and sound airmanship on both occasions.

"We did ground duties together in the Gunnery Section under a new Gunnery Leader who arrived early 1944, we remained friendly throughout the period. John was older and more mature than the average 21 year old like myself. Infinitely wiser, and a friendly colleague whose observations were greatly valued, whilst I was 'Taff' or 'Trev' he often became 'Pop' in our conversations. We tended to look out for one another on return from operations - I was personally aware of some difficult operations his crew experienced, and the Nuremburg raid, 30/3/44 readily comes to mind. It was a raid I won't forget.

"His concern for my welfare showed following the Munich operation, 24/4/44,

when we landed at Tangmere after many difficulties. I know he spent some time back at 'Base' checking we were back safely.

"On returning from the Schweinfurt raid, 26/4/44, I became painfully aware that luck had run out for P/O Dickinson and crew who had gone missing.

"I feel honoured to have known John Ellenor who gave all for his country. His letter to his daughter more than aptly shows his reasons for serving with 49 Squadron, Bomber Command."

Former WAAF MT Driver, Vi Winters sent the following letter:

"Life is like a ladder, one minute you're on the top rung and before you know it you're back down at the bottom. I was at that point in May 2007 and it was then that I contacted RAFA Welfare Officer Valerie Nye. She works voluntarily and is a wonderful lady. On her visit she took some details of my situation and not long after I received a letter saying that I had been booked in at Princess Marina House in Rustington, near Littlehampton [*Run by The RAFBF. ED*], for two weeks respite.

"I can't speak highly enough of the wonderful hospitality I received there. All the staff were charming and catered for my every need. I even did my first scooter ride and was spoiled with a lovely room overlooking the sea. I made many friends including a lady called Joan Owens who writes lovely poems.

"We were very honoured because several members of The Guinea Pig Club arrived. We had a Gala Dinner where many distinguished people made speeches. Sadly their reunions have finished but I told them they would always be welcome with the 4T9ers! Their Secretary, J. Perry Esq., gave me a tie and badge and I'm now a Friend of The Guinea Pig Club.

"Myself and Joan, who I mentioned earlier, had so much in common and many stories were exchanged about our wartime experiences. Unfortunately most would be unprintable!!

"Having met so many people who had suffered so much it really came home to me how there is always someone worse off than yourself. Their bravery and good humour in such adversity has made me a lot stronger person and I shall for ever be in debt to them.

"As I said earlier I could not put into words how wonderful my stay was and if anyone out there needs a lift, I can only say, get in touch with your RAFA Welfare Officer. I am very lucky to have been invited back again.

"I searched the library for information on the 49ers but without success. However, I would very much like to present the library with our magazine as I feel it would be a nice gesture. Also maybe Ted could supply me with half a dozen coasters with the words, 'Have a drink on a 4T9er' that I could forward to Princess Marina House as a thank you for their wonderful hospitality. And yes, I did have a drink on the 49ers while I was there, too many I'm afraid!!"

Regarding the coasters to which Vi refers, each year for our reunion Ted Cachart produces individual coasters as place names. As well as the guests

name he adds 'Have a drink on a 4T9er'. Vi enclosed a brochure for Princess Marina House with her letter so if you require further information please get in touch with me. Ed.

Jock Irving wrote from Annan:

"I did think to begin with that I was not in favour of opening up the membership, but, now realise that this is the only way forward as all World War II aircrew are getting fewer. Congrats to you for recruiting new members.

"I would like to enquire about Dot Smith. Would she be the young lady who used to meet us when we returned from ops? She seemed to always be there when we got to dispersal. I wonder if she still remembers Jack Lett's crew. I remember her. See if you can find out for me Alan."

I wrote to Jock to confirm that Dot, Everett in the old days, was indeed one of the MT Drivers who ferried the crews to and from their aircraft and phoned Dot and put her in touch with Jock. She did remember the 'Lett' crew who completed their tour between 20th December 1943 and 16th June 1944, mainly in Lancaster ND695, EA-B. Ed.

Former Valiant Crew Chief, Vic Savage, sent the photograph shown below:

"...I'm enclosing a picture of a Mosquito, with a familiar number on the fuselage. I can't give you any gen – I've had this for a while and have no idea where or when I obtained it. Perhaps some other member had seen this picture in a magazine at some time."



Squadron numbers were painted on pre-war Hinds, but a post-war Mosquito attached to 49 Squadron? The photo was cut from an unknown aeronautical magazine. Ed.

Noel Callon sent in some interesting photographs which we will feature in future issues. This was the transition from Lancasters to Lincolns. He wrote:

"...I was just a National Serviceman but was proud, as were all of us who joined 49 Squadron, at RAF Upwood in 1949.

"I first trained at RAF Tech Training School Cosford as an Airframe Mechanic, known as a Rigger when I got to Upwood on 49, the best one! Also at Upwood were 214, 148 and 7 Squadrons, all with Lancasters. I served with 49 Squadron until I finished my National Service in the RAF as a Leading Aircraftsman. The very best years of my life!"

This letter is typical of many that I receive in that it states the pride, regardless of rank or the era, that members of 49' felt in their squadron. So what was it about 49 Squadron RAF that made it so special? Ed.

K.W. Manning wrote:

"...when I was up north on holiday recently I watched a northern edition of The Politics Show in which an MP was campaigning for a medal for members of Bomber Command and asking for support. I wonder if 49 Squadron Association could lend their support to his cause. I'm sorry that it only went out in the north and not all the country.

The MP is; Austin Mitchell, MP for Grimsby.;

BBC TV, 2, St Peter's Square, Leeds, LL9 8AH."

I have written to Mr Mitchell pledging our support. Ed.

Geoff Easterling sent me a copy of the piece in the Mail on Sunday and 'Spike' Milligan drew my attention to an article in the Telegraph, both relating to a 'Bomber Command' medal. Geoff also included a copy of a letter that he wrote to the Editor of 'The Mail'. I have previously reported on the poor 'turn out' on the website petition to the PM and the standard negative replies to my letters to Prince Charles and Des Browne. Keep on plugging away! Ed.

Tom Hawkins e-mailed from Australia to draw my attention to a feature in The Lincolnshire Echo concerning the new Dambusters film. Stephen Fry, the comedian, has apparently finished the script. There has been considerable reaction to the rumour that Guy Gibson's Labrador's name has been changed to Trigger. This Hollywood style messing with history annoys me intensely. The dog's name was Nigger. That's what is on his headstone. The last film that I saw at the cinema was 'Jaws' and I certainly won't be parting with any of my hard earned shekels to see this one. Who needs a remake?

Coincidentally a week or so later there was an article in the Sunday Express about the new 'Red Baron' film in which it appears that a romance has been added. It reads; "Director Nikolai Mullerschön is unrepentant: 'A meticulous reconstruction about the Baron's life and the historical setting was not uppermost in my mind. That didn't interest me so much. It is more important to see what is relevant to people today. I saw no sense in making a film like a well researched documentary'."

Don't call it 'The Red Baron' then! That's how history is distorted, but I'm afraid that it's been going on since John Wayne 'liberated' Burma!

Andrew Macdonald e-mailed from Brisbane:

“Just wanted to let you know that I have been given official confirmation that the Memorial Service to my Great Uncle (Flight Lieutenant Charles Dunnet) and his crew will go ahead as planned on the morning of June the 14th, which is a Saturday. I'm over the moon but there's still heaps to do and I'm starting to run out of time. This year is going incredibly quickly.....

“The service is due to take place on the edge of the Village of Boerdonk, which is a few Miles North-East of Eindhoven. The Town Council of Veghel, the Municipal City for that area has graciously agreed to help with the service...without

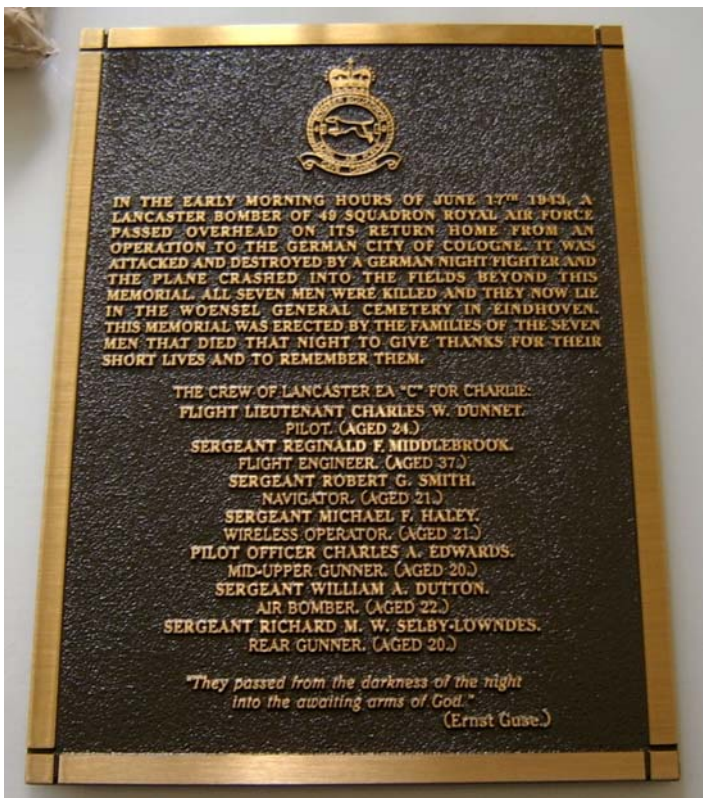
them I wouldn't have been able to go ahead....too much money and I am geographically challenged here on the other side of the World. However, I'm trying to sort out accommodation for some of the families/relatives of the crewmen. I've been able to trace the families of 6 of the boys in question and I'm hoping to find anyone related to Reggie Middlebrook; the crew's Flight Engineer. Finger's crossed.

“I've included a

picture of the memorial plaque that I had made over here in Australia. Hope you like the end result....you'll notice that the quotation was taken from Mr. Ward's book....I thought it was so very appropriate....”

Congratulations Andrew. It is hoped that we can arrange for some of our Dutch friends to represent our Association and lay a wreath on our behalf. Ed.

A year or so ago we were discussing the Bomber Command Memorial in Lincoln Cathedral. Following a recent visit Sheila Hamilton called to say that it is much more accessible now and is spot-lit. Good news indeed! Ed.



CAN YOU HELP?

The April issue of FlyPast reports that the remains of several former RAF Hawker Hinds have been recovered from Afghanistan and are now in southern England. The airframes are reported to be almost corrosion free and it is possible that a number will be restored to flight condition. The serial numbers include; K5409, K5462, K5554, K6618, K6833 and L7191. Does anyone know if any of these were allocated to 49 Squadron? Incidentally, there is already one airworthy example of Sidney Camm's beautiful biplane. K5414 flies with The Shuttleworth Trust from Old Warden, south of Bedford, whilst two of the very similar Nimrods fly at Duxford. Ed.

In the August 2007 issue, our Archivist, Ed Norman, asked about the initials that he found in a logbook. Former Gunnery Leader, Ed Smith kindly replied but I misplaced his comments. On posing the question to him again he kindly replied as follows:

“Glad to be of help but as I recall I qualified my submission by saying that these abbreviations could mean different manoeuvres depending on the A/C type. Remember there was a gun turret on the Boulton Paul Defiant in the B of B. These entries, in someone's logbook if I recall, should also identify the A/C. For the Lanc or Halifax it could also be the entry of a Mid Upper Gunner.

“So, from a Rear Gunner's log book:

FRBT– Fired rounds beam tests; Simple test of weapon function and communication with tow A/C flying at same speed.

FRUT– Fired rounds under tests; Drogue towed under A/C.

FRQT-- Fired rounds quarter cross under; Drogue towed under A/C on port and starboard stern quarters.

FRBT– Unknown. Could be FRST; Training bombers had a an internal drogue which the Rear Gunner reeled out and fired dead astern. Reeling in was a chore which I did not enjoy. I therefore was prone to shoot to sever the tow wire and let it float wherever.”

Red Arrows pilot (Red 3) F/Lt Mike Ling wrote from RAF Scampton:

“My grandfather was a member of 49 Squadron from April 1945 to April 1947, employed as Flight Engineer. Unfortunately he passed away in 1994 and, as such, I was unable to share any flying experiences with him. His name was Sgt James Christopher Parkinson (Number 1675407).

“I have had his logbook for a few years now and I would like to meet, if possible, some of his colleagues from his Royal Air Force days.”

Does anyone remember him? I'm sure that he would have been very proud of Mike's achievements. Ed.

Non Member Philip Breckon e-mailed to ask if anyone remembers his father. Raymond Cowlin was a Junior Technician in 49' on Christmas Island. Ed.



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Our ever vigilant Archivist has come up with the following;

"I came across a reference to "Deckers" in the O.R.B. and can't find it mentioned in the "Dog". The reference states: 'Deckers were dropped near Brun, Aachen and Maas River - 10.7.41.'

"Anyone know what the dickens a decker was?"

At last this explains that well known photo taken in London during the blitz of a bus standing on its rear end in a big hole in the road. It must be an unexploded 'zwei-decker' dropped by the Germans! Ed.

Tom Bennett phoned regarding the yellow spot behind Lancaster pilot's seats. Having shown The 4T9er to the 617 Squadron Archivist he was told that the spot indicated the only piece of armour plating on the Lanc. Thinking about it though, why bother to paint it yellow? Ed.